

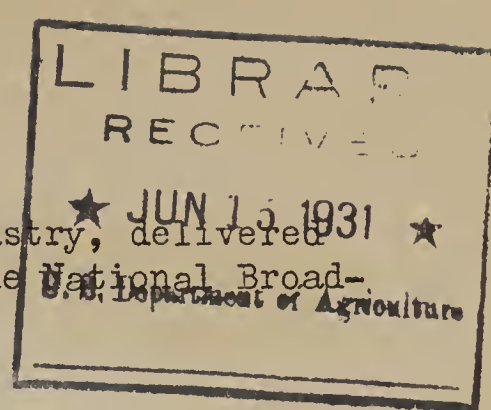
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19
P698a

THE GARDEN CALENDAR

A radio talk by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered through WRC and 42 other radio stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, June 2, 1931.



Hello Farm and & Home Hour Folks: I had my plans all made to talk to you about watering garden crops today but Sunday night and Monday we had the most wonderful rain here in the Washington area and that has sort of spoiled reception for anything on irrigation, at least for this part of the country. Last Tuesday you may recall, in our Progressive Garden Club program we talked about roses but our topic was rather too large for our time and we failed to take up several important points, so under the order of unfinished business I am going to consider two or three of these points.

Right here I want to brag just a little for my roses, and roses in general around Washington, are a glorious sight at this time. In the case of my own roses I attribute their splendor mainly to two things, proper soil conditions and severe pruning. As brought out in our meeting last Tuesday the soil for roses should be enriched and prepared to a depth of at least thirty inches with plenty of bone meal and dairy barn compost worked into the soil. In addition liberal top dressings of compost will aid materially in keeping the rose plants at their best.

Now as regards the matter of pruning roses, allow me to suggest that both the time and the method of pruning are extremely important. As to the time for pruning, when dormant cut-flower roses are set in the fall one-half or more of the wood should be removed. In the spring these plants should be cut back more, leaving only two or three stems with four or five eyes on each. This will leave the stems 6 inches or less in length. When dormant roses are planted in the spring they should be pruned at the time of planting, leaving four or five eyes on a stem, as already suggested. In regions where there is no danger of injury from frost or dry winds, the final pruning, as described for spring, may be done in the fall. Personally I like to give my roses a fairly severe pruning in the fall then go over them again in the spring and remove any surplus or injured wood. This applies to the bush or cut flower roses and not to climbers.

In sections where roses never suffer from cold the pruning can be completed in the fall, or at least before any growth starts in the spring. In regions where cold sometimes injures roses, teas and their hybrids, should be trimmed later or about the time growth starts. In many parts of the country roses are at the height of their early blooming period right now and if you want the perpetuals to go on blooming during the summer and fall careful attention must be given to the summer pruning.

Where most of the flowers are being removed with long stems as cut flowers this will largely take the place of the summer pruning, but if the roses are allowed to remain on the plants rather heavy pruning of the long flower stems should be given. The stronger growing roses, like Radiance for example, should not be pruned as heavily as the weaker ones as the heavy pruning often causes them to grow an excess of wood at the expense of the bloom. For the production of a few choice blooms, as well as to secure a

succession of bloom, severe pruning must be practiced. When a large number of blooms of small size is the aim, the pruning should be less severe, that is more eyes should be left on each stalk. In the case of climbing roses, the main pruning should be done just after they bloom at which time the most of the older wood should be removed and the new shoots thinned out and a new top formed.

I am sure that you will all agree that it is difficult to describe all of the points relative to the pruning roses in a short radio talk. If I could only spend a half-hour with a sharp pair of pruning shears in your rose garden and give you a practical demonstration it would be more effective. Our Farmer's Bulletin No. 750 on Roses for the Home not only tells how the pruning should be done but contains a number of illustrations that are very helpful, however, our supply of this bulletin is exhausted at present but a new lot has been ordered and will be available in a short time. The majority of the members of the Progressive Garden Club have been provided with copies of this bulletin and those who have not received their copies will be supplied just as soon as the new lot becomes available. By-the-way a special meeting of the Progressive Garden Club will be broadcast next Tuesday during the Farm and Home Hour.

It has been my policy in connection with the garden calendar talks to emphasize the importance of putting fruits and vegetables up in an attractive manner for the market. Two weeks ago I mentioned the practice of certain gardeners in the late tomato districts of planting a late crop of tomatoes for green-ripening after frost. Right away I receive a complaint from a grower that he does not get satisfactory prices for his late ripened tomatoes. He admits, however, that he is not grading his fruit and as a result it does not show up well in comparison with the late tomatoes shipped from California. Dr. D. F. Fisher, in charge of transportation and storage experiments with fruits and vegetables for the Department tells me that the early tomato shippers of the south are now having their troubles with diseases in their tomatoes and that in many cases these troubles are due to the tomatoes being picked from the vines while entirely too green then held in ripening sheds until sufficiently ripened to send to market.

Farmer's Bulletin No. 1291 on the Preparation of Fresh Tomatoes for the Market has just been reprinted and it contains a lot of good suggestions for the growers and shippers of early tomatoes. The author of this bulletin, No. 1-2-9-1, emphasizes the fact that fresh tomatoes are tender and very perishable and that the fruits must be picked and handled very carefully and promptly. Much of the trouble arises from poor packing and loading in the cars and the strictest rules as to grading, packing and loading must be adhered to if the perishable fruit is to reach the market in good condition. I know from practical experience, if you will pardon this little personal statement, I have gathered the tomatoes from the field, helped to grade and pack them, loaded them into the cars and braced the load so that the crates could not shift in transit. I have visited the markets and seen the tomatoes come out of the cars in good conditions and find a ready sale on the markets. It can be done and it pays to do the work right. Those lug boxes of late tomatoes shipped from California are so attractive and their contents so well graded and packed that they just naturally sell when they reach the market.